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PRESENTS

//SRIMAD RAGHAVENDRA VIJAYA//

by Sri GuruSarvabhouma Pada Charana Sevaka – Sudheendrachar

/Sri Gurubyo Namaha//Parama Gurubyo Namaha// Moola Gurubyo Namaha// Sri Moola Gurubyo Namaha//Sri Devataye Namaha// Sri Vasudevaya Namaha// //Mookopi yat prasadena Mukundashayanayate Raja Rajayaterikto Raghavendram tam ashraye//

PART - 1:

I salute Sri Veda Vyasa, the 'Moola Rishi' from whom all Vedas and Brahma Sootras originated, I salute Sri Anandatirtha Baghavatpada, the propounder of 'Dwaita Philosophy', I salute Godess Sharada, the Source of all Knowledge and the Divine Consort of Sri Bramha Deva, I salute Sri Vyasa Theertha, who was at the forefront in propagation of Vedas, Brahma Sutras and in establishing the duality doctrine of Acharya Madhwa, I salute Sri Vijayeendra Thirtha who by mastering all branches of fine arts regined supreme in the quest of Knowledge, I salute Sri Sudheendra Thirtha who proved to be a great proponent of Vedanta and Madhwa Sastras, and I salute Sri Sri Raghavendra Thirtha who attained the pinnacle of glory with the fullest grace of Godess Saraswati.
This true story of Sri Raghavendra Thirtha was penned by Kavi Kula Thilaka Sri Narayanacharya who belonged to Kashyapa Gotra and was the son of Sri Laxminarasimhacharya and Venkatamba. This work resembles the Ramayana MahaKavya written by Rishi Valmiki who wrote the great epic after seeing the events unfold infront of his own eyes!

Brief Introduction:
At the beginning of the primordial epoch, Sriman Narayana Himself incarnated as the Hamsa Namaka Paramatma - signifying Swan and the pure and pristine 'gyana' (knowledge) in both quality and content and to uphold and spread the Universal Truth of the Vedas whose main sources was the Supreme Lord Himself. He then passed on the custody of the Vedas to Sri Brahma Deva. Sri Brahma Deva in turn passed on the 'treasure chest of knowledge' to an extraordinary line of sages each carrying with him an 'amsha' of Sriman Narayan Himself and enabling and enriching the 'gyana bhandara' with their own mastery and excellence before passing it on to the next one in line.

Thus the 'Veda Samrajya' grew in stature with the unstinting efforts of many great aestics who followd in His footsteps thereafter. Among them was Sri Anandathirtha (the reincarnation of Sri Vayu Deva) who was the 16th in line after the Supreme Lord Hamsa. After Sri Anandathirtha his four principal disciples kept the torch of 'Knowledge' handed over from their illustrious predecessors burning brightly throughout the tumultous period wherein many false branches of knowledge distracted the self righteous away from the correct path of the ETERNAL VEDAS. One of the greatest in this elite group of sages was Sri Raghavendra Thirtha who ascended the Parama Hamsa Peeta and was 32nd inline after Sri Hamsa Namaka Paramatma.

PART - 2:

The three incarnations of Sri Vayu Deva - Hanumantha, Bhimaseena and Madhwacharya, performed totally dedicated service to Sri Hari who Himself had reincarnated as Sri Rama, Sri Krishna and Sri Veda Vyasa. Sriman Madhwacharya who received the Brahma Sutras from Sri Veda Vyasa wrote pathbreaking treatises known as "Bhasyas" and laid the foundations for his "Duality Doctrine" wherein he propounded the Supremacy of the "Paramatma" over the "Jiva Atma" and stressed that the living world which we see all around us was 'satya' or 'true' and created by the Supreme Lord and not "maya" or "illusion" as propounded by his other contemporaries.
Sri Moola Rama idol which was once worshipped by Sri Brahma Deva, Sri Sita Devi, Sri Hanumantha and the Emperors belonging to the Surya and Chandra Dynasties came to be in the custody of Sri Madhwacharya from Gajapati dynasty of Orissa. Acharya Madhwa also made it compulsary for all ascetics who succeeded him to the "parama hamsa peeta" to worship Sri Moola Rama idol. Next the mantle of this "Veda Samrajya" was passed onto Sri Padmanabha Thirtha who proved to be a worthy successor to his great Guru.
Lateron under Sri Narahari Thirtha and Sri Madhava Thirtha, this unending quest for knowledge blossomed into infinite proportions. Thereafter Sri Akshobya thirtha took up the reigns and responsibilities of carrying forward a still young 'dwaita' doctrine and to popularise it far and wide throughout the country. This task was carried out in a most outstanding manner by Sri Aksobya thirtha who was able to defeat even Vidyaranya in an open debate over the supremacy of the 'paramatma over the jivatma'. Next this doctrine of 'Hari Sarvotama - Vayu Jivotama' propounded by Acharya Madhwa reached its zenith both in popularity and for its 'forceful justification', under the matchless mastery of the great Sri Jayateertha Muni. As centuries rolled by this hoary tradition was carried forward by eminent pontiffs like Sri Vidyadhiraja Thirtha, Sri Kavindra Thirtha, Sri Vagheesa Thirtha, Sri Ramachandra Thirtha, Sri Vibhudendra Thirtha, Sri Jitamitra Thirtha and Sri Surendra Thirtha who suceeded in laying everlasting foundations for the growth of "madhwa" school of thought, firmly among the masses thereby attracting numerous followers

owing their allegiance to the concept of 'dualism' or 'Dwaitha' sect.
Next to ascend the 'Paramahamsa Peeta' was Sri Vijayeendra Thirtha, a profound scholar of great merit who authored immortal classics on Dwaitha philosophy and also worshipped the famed Sri Moola Rama idol with great devotion. The ageing Sri Vijayeendra Thirtha passed on the reigns of the Sri Mutt along with the custody of the Sri Moola Rama idols to his principle disciple Sri Sudheendra Thirtha at Kumbakonam. The fame of the Sri Mutt at Kumbakonam under Sri Sudheendra Thirtha spread far and wide and soon it became the centre for pursuing studies in the Vedas and Sastras. In due course Sri Sudheendra Thirtha also became the 'Raja Guru' of King Raghunatha Bhoopala of Tanjavur. It was to this Srimutt run by Sri Sudheendra Thirtha at Kumbakonam that an young Venkatanatha (the future Sri Raghvendra Thirtha) came to pursue his studies.
This holy story now begins from the time of Venkatanatha's forefathers who lived under the royal patronage of Emperor Krishadevaraya of Vijayanagar in the 14th Century AD.

PART – 3:

Every self righteous person often remembers his ancestors from whom he has descended and regularly prays to his forefathers within that particular lineage or 'gothra'. This story centres around Sri Venkatanatha belonging to 'Goutama Gothra',whose family was well known for their unmatched excellence in playing on the 'veena', a traditional musical instrument.
Rishi Goutama was considered to be the foremost among all Rishis and was also a great follower of 'Vedic' tradition. During his time Sriman Narayana Himself had already reincarnated as Sri Veda Vyasa and segregated the 'Vedas'. And all those great and noble souls who were fortunate enough to be born into this illustrious lineage of Rishi Goutama continued the 'hallowed Vedic tradition' of their 'Moola Rishi' and were successful in attaining 'Poorna Moksha' (self emancipation), which had eluded even other 'Deva and Devataas' of Indra Loka!.
Sri Krishna Bhatta was born in one such family tracing their lineage to Rishi Goutama. Krishna Bhatta soon became well versed in music and all other branches of fine arts known as 'Gandharva Vidya'. His fame soon spread far and wide and attracted the attention of Emperor Sri Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar who enrolled him as his royal court musician. The Emperor honoured Krishna Bhatta with many riches and gave him many a worthy title.
Krishna Bhatta had a son named Kanakachala Bhatta who was also a great scholar and many times his fame surpassed that of his own father!
Sri Thimanna Bhatta who was renowned as 'Veena Thimanna Bhtta' was the son of Kanakachala Bhatta. Thimanna Bhatta was also an excellent player of the 'veena' and he was a great devotee of Lord Venkateshwara of Tirupati.
Thimanna Bhatta lived in Vijayanagar along with his dutiful wife Gopikamba who was a perfect housewife to him. She often 'found' her God in her husband.
The pious couple who were childless once undertook a pilgrimage to

perform 'sevas' to propitiate Lord Venkateshwara of Tirupati. The couple prayed to the Lord with utmost devotion and performed severe austerities in a strictly traditional way. After finishing the 'sevas' they left Tirupati and settled down in a brahmin 'agrahara'(suburb)at "Patanam", where their first girl child was born and was named as Venkatamba. Soonafter a second boy child was also born to the couple who named the child as Gururaja. Since the two infants were born with the Blessings of Sri Hari (Lord Venkateshwara) and Guru, they were named as Venkatamba and Gururaja respectively.

As years passsed by, Thimanna Bhatta and Gopikamba longed to have another son since according to the 'sastras', 'two sons' added to the glory of one's family and thereby liberating the head of the family from 'pithru runa'. So once again the couple undertook a pilgrimage to Tirupati. Lord Venkateshwara being pleased by the couple's steadfast 'sevas' granted them their ardent wish and soon Gopikamba was to become a mother for the third time.

Overnight the entire complexion of the 'expectant mother-to-be', Gopikamba changed dramatically! People used to be taken aback on seeing her! - she was resplendent with a fair glow of while light! Such was the luminescence emanating from her that she avoided even the full moon light since it was no match for her own inner radiance and the full moon light appeared dark in comparison to her! It appeared as though the eclipsed moon had taken refuge in her womb!

All the three 'manifest obligations' - i.e. 'runas' - like 'deva runa', 'rishi runa' and 'pithru runa' which are normally present in every individual until they are properly propitiated through the performance of various Karmas (duties) and deeds, vanished from the body of Gopikamba, the very minute when the 'amsha' of the Lord's greatest of 'Baghavat Bakta' - Sri Prahlada Raja, entered her womb!!

Generally it is a practice amongst pregnant women to crave for eating mud and sometimes even ash! But as a sign that a 'maha sanyasi' would be born soon to Gopikamba, she began to eat only 'red colored mud' and drape herself in 'red sarees'!! She used to take bath only in the river and not with the water that was available in the household! She used to crave for the food and other offerings from her neighbours rather than eat the food that was cooked in her own house! This was also a 'sign' that the baby to be born would become a 'monk' travelling far and wide and accept 'biksha' (ritual offerings of alms), from innumerable devotees!! Gopikamba always used to hear religious discourses on Sri Hari and used to sing innumerable 'Devara namas" (song compositions) in praise of Sri Hari with utmost devotion.

In due course a divine baby boy was born to the pious couple. The joy of the parents knew no bounds! Thimanna Bhatta rejoiced at the thought of having been blessed with a second 'male offspring' and thus fulfilling his customary obligation to his forefathers and 'kula devathas' (family dieties)

Thimanna Bhatta performed 'homas' (sacred fire rituals) in the 'sastraic' way to celebrate the birth of his second son. The sacred fire from the 'agni kund' combusting with the air 'vayu', burnt so fiercely that day, that to the onlookers it looked as though 'Agni Deva" (God of Fire) Himself had come to

participate in the rituals and to Bless the Divine Child - who was the Supreme Lord's Greatest 'Baktas'!! Thimanna Bhatta gave away many offerings to pious Brahmins to mark this august occasion.
The divine baby boy was a joy to behold! Time stood still while watching the child's antics! Whenever the little child kept its feet into its mouth and used to suckle on its most innocently and thereby wet it, it seemed as though that the child was signifying that in the future countless devotees would wash its feet with holy waters from many holy rivers!!
The doting parents named the child as 'Venkatanatha' since he was born as a 'boon'from Lord Venkateshwara of Tirupati. The infant used to crawl all around the house on its little tiny feet and hands, but to those who stood and watched, it was though the "CELESTIAL COW, - MOTHER KAMADHENU" Herself!!
was walking around with four legs!!, and thus signifying that the four legs of 'Dharma' itself was moving around!! to uphold the Supremacy of the four Vedas!!!
The child's facial radiance was breathtakingly beautiful! This was a sign to the onlookers that the Supreme Lord Sriman Narayana Himself had take up residence in the Soul of the tiny baby!! Whenever the child hesitatingly walked around the house balancing on its tiny feet, and fell, once again got up and fell, it was a 'sign' that in the future this child would take up 'sanyasa' and "FALL AT THE LOTUS FEET OF SRI LAXMINARAYANA" a countless
number of times!!!
Thimanna Bhatta performed "Anna Muhurta" when the infant Venkatanatha was six months old and later the customary 'choula' (first tonsuring of hair) when Venkatanatha turned six years old. In due course the young lad was initiated into 'aksharabyasa' - writing the "OM" letter - which heralded the start of the learning process to the divine child. But the father Thimanna Bhatta was taken aback when the young boy, Venkatanatha, questioned him sharply as to how such an all encompassing Supreme Being, "Sriman Narayana" could be found in such a small letter as in "OM"! Thus Venkatanatha showed evey early in his life that he knew beforehand all about the "Universal meaning of OM"! and the Supremacy of Sriman Narayana Himself!
Thimanna Bhatta's relatives used to unendingly marvel at the young boy's prodigy and praised Thimanna Bhatta's good fortune in being a father to such a divine child like Venkatanatha!!

PART– 4:

Some years later, Thimanna Bhatta thought of marrying off his daughter Venkatamba, to a suitable bride groom. Thimanna Bhatta had heard of Laxminarasimhacharya of Kashyapa Gotra (lineage), a great scholar of his times, who lived in the holy city of Madurai. Thimanna Bhatta had not seen him and so he came to Madurai to see Laxminarasimhacharya and meet him and his parents to discuss about the prospects of a marriage alliance. Soon

after Thimanna Bhatta celebrated the marriage of his daughter with Laxminarasimhacharya with great pomp and fervor. At the same time the thread ceremony (upanayanam) of the eldest son Gururaja was also performed. Thimanna Bhatta proved to be a good host in both these celebrations.

A few years later Thimanna Bhatta passed away leaving the burden and responsibility of bringing up the family on the shoulders of his eldest son Gururaja. As per his late father's wishes Gururaja, performed the thread ceremony of his younger brother Venkatanatha. Just like the young Lord Krishna was sent to study at the 'Gurukula' of Sage Saandeepanacharya, likewise young Venkatanatha was sent to Madurai to study 'Vedas and Shastras' from his brother-in-law Laxminarasimhacharya. At the 'Gurukula' run by Laxminarasimhacharya, Venkatanatha excelled at his studies. He could grasp intricate details of complicated 'Veda-Shastras' very easily, while his other co-students struggled to comprehend even the elementary lessons! This earned him the favor of his tutor Laxminarasimhacharya.

Venkatanatha was very much unlike his other companions at the 'gurukula'. He did not waste any time in pursuit of other activities that would usually interest the students of his age group, instead he devoted his time completely in the pursuit of 'gaining knowledge' and soon was at the threshold of understanding the 'Ultimate Knowledge' in respect to 'Para Brahman' Himself!

Also, cursiosly Venkatanatha showed not much interest in any sporting activities except that which involved in the control of his breadth! Venkatanatha showed great interest in those games that involved 'breadth retention' which helped him to enhance his powers of concentration and in meditation!!

Venkatanatha slowly but surely turned into a scholar of all round merit! Goddess Saraswathi (Goddess of Learning) Herself Blessed Venkatanatha and was 'Omnipresent" in him along with Her Husband Sri Bramha Deva (The Creator) Himself! On seeing the presence of his elder brother 'in' Venkatanatha, Manmatha Deva (God of Cupid) along with his wife Rathi Devi, also 'cast their influence' on the personality of Venkatanatha to such an extent that he was transformed into a youthful bridegroom fit for a princess!!

Venkatanatha's two eyes resembled the 'celestial fish - MATSYA'! (one of the divine forms of Sriman Narayana) It seemed as though Sriman Narayana (who was 'upastith' in Venkatanatha's eyes) Himself had come to teach the Vedas to Sri Bramha Deva who was present in Sri Venkatanatha!! Venktanatha's face resembled the 'treasure trove' (Poorna Kumbha) of all Universal Knowledge! The thick growth of hair (mustache) above Venkatanatha's mouth resembled like a 'chain' tied around the 'Poorna Kumbha' that was his face!! Venkatanatha's thickset eyebrows resembled the 'dark moon light' which was cut into two pieces by Sri Bramha Deva and 'pasted' on his forehead!!

While Sri Bramha Deva was so engaged in cutting and pasting the 'pieces of dark moonlight' on the forehead of Venkatanatha the 'nectar' arising out of such a cut, dripped down the nose of Venkatanatha and accumulated in his lips turning it to look like a 'golden hued pot of honey'!!

It seemed as though Goddess Saraswathi danced on the tongue of Venkatanatha! His nicely set teeth resembled the 'pearl necklace' that adorned the neck of Goddess Saraswathi! His two ears resembled the 'SRIKARA' and 'OMKARA'!!, two of the most holy signs representing Sriman Narayana Himself! His chest resembled a 'huge door' that was tightly shut by the 'thick rope' like hairs that had grown there abundantly!

It is said that Manmatha Deva along with his consort Rati Devi could not enter the heart of Venkatanatha, since it was already 'occupied' by his parents, Laxmi Devi and Sriman Narayan!! Thus seemingly left out, Manmatha 'sat outside' on the huge chest of Venkatanatha!!

The Creator Bramha Deva had sent Venkatanatha to this 'earth' with three visible lines on his neck! These three lines were like a 'beacon' to the eyes of all beholders that this Venkatanatha, was the 'chosen one' to alleviate the sufferings and to wash away the sins of the peoples of the Three Worlds!

The neck of Venkatanatha resembled a 'Conch Shell' which had come out of the Oceans to 'escape the numerous rocks and boulders that were being thrown by the monkey armies of Sri Rama in their enthusiasm to build a bridge across the Ocean' and to 'escape being swallowed by Sage Agasthya' and to 'escape the churnings of the Oceans using Mount Meru by the Suras and Asuras in search of the Divine Nectar (Amrit)!! Now this 'Conch Shell' had at last found refuge and resided peacefully in the throat of Venkatanatha marking him out as an 'extraordinarily Divine Person'!

Venkatanatha's feet resembled 'water lillies'! Infact providene knew beforehand that in future this feet would be constantly awash with the 'oath-rituals' of thousands of devotees and hence had kept them always wet! Also the soles of the feet were very tender! In fact providence must have also wished that such a feet should always adorn wooden sandals (padukas) compulsorily in order to travel great distances in the cause of spreading 'dharma' in future!

To such a youthful Venkatanatha, his elder brother Gururaja thought of marrying him to a suitable maiden. A young girl named Saraswathi who was residing in the nearby Brahmin 'agrahara' was selected to be the prospective bride for Venkatanatha. The group consisting of Venkatanatha, his mother Gopikamaba and the eldest son Gururaja came to Saraswathi's house to ask for the consent of her parents. Saraswathi's parents were overjoyed when they saw their 'would be son-in-law' Venkatanatha and immediately consented for the marriage.

Venkatanatha's and Saraswathi's marriage was celebrated in grand style with unbridled joy and enthusiasm amongst all concerned. The newly weds exchanged 'coy glances' much to the amusement amongst all those who were watching them! The marriage celebrations began in a very traditional manner accompanied by the chanting of the sacred hymns in the presence of many holy priests.

PART – 5:

Venkatanatha and Saraswati's marriage was also in a way 'the marriage' of their two respective families! The relatives on both sides 'took to each other' very affectionately. Youngsters bowed to the elderly persons with much respect and reverence. The elders amongst them 'showered' their choicest blessings on the enthusiastic youngsters. The relatives of Venkatanatha arrived at the marriage pandal which was richly decorated with colorful buntings, and covered with rich silk.

On the day of the marriage, Venkatanatha got up well before sunrise to perform 'Sandhya Vandana' to 'welcome' the Rising Sun with the utterances of the 'Gayatri Mantra'. Next the bride's parents' made the customary offerings of gifts and ornaments to the bride groom Venkatanatha and escorted him most dutifully to the marriage pandal. Venkatanatha's in-laws also prayed to their 'family deities' and 'Navagraha Devtas' and made cumpulsory ritualistic offerings of various 'food grains' to them and prayed for the smooth conduct of the marriage unhindered by any obstacles.

Soon after the bride's father offered 'pooja' to the bridegroom Venkatanatha and gave his daughter in marriage to him much to the happiness and joy of all those assembled. The young bride Saraswati's face brightened like a lotus flower in full bloom on seeing the face of her young husband Venkatanatha!

Meanwhile a 'collection' of chaste women sang many melodious songs in the courtyard of the marriage hall and showered it with hundreds of flower petals all over, creating a heavenly ambience! This looked as though Gods and Goddesses themselves were showering flowers from the heavens on the occasion of the marriage of Venkatanatha and Saraswati! The guests presented the newly weds with many gifts and costly clothes accompanied by the chanting of holy hymns by the priests present. Next the customary 'aarathi' was performed to the newly weds by groups of elderly women.

The assemblage of learned scholars showered their choicest blessings on the young couple. The pandits blessed the couple to have a long and fruitful married life, with unbreakable and unstinting love and affection towards each other, to beget many worthy children, to procure wealth, land and livestock in the 'correct manner' and thus prosper in their 'new life' that lay before them!

They also blessed the young couple by wishing that they should lead their married life in the manner of "Lord Indra - Sachi Devi, Lord Brahma - Saraswati Devi, Lord Nayarana - Sri Mahalaxmi Devi and Lord Shiva - Parvati Devi"! --- the Divine Couples' residing in the Heavens!

Next the newly wed couple prayed to 'Sri Hari and Guru' and respectfully prostrated before the numerous elderly scholars who had come to attend the marriage. Later on the invitees who had come to attend the marriage were fed with sumptuous meals by the father of the bride who had taken great care in seeing that the food was 'cooked and served' according to the strict traditions, much to the contentment of all those gathered.

Thus the wedding went on for three full days in a grand style, with the bride's father giving away many gifts to all the guests who had attended the marriage. The newly wed Venkatanatha also mingled freely with the assembled scholars and pleased every one by his 'majestic countenance' and scholarly qualities, yet soft spoken nature. Finally, Venkatanatha performed the 'Sesha Homa' to mark the end of his marriage celebrations.

After the marriage celebrations had ended Venkatanatha accompanied by his wife Saraswati and his other relatives left for his home town. The young couple were seen off by an array of 'dazzling damsels' who gave them a befitting farewell sendoff! Venkatanatha spent some years peacefully in his new role as a family man. Saraswati soon proved to be a good match for Venkatanatha and became his beloved wife.

PART -6:

Some years later, Venkatanatha left for the Sri Mutt at Kumbakonam to see his 'kula guru', Sudheendra Theertha. Kumbakonam and its surrounding regions were blessed with the perennial river flowing down from the Sahyadri ranges and was inhabited by the dwellings of hundreds and thousands of pious brahmin households, populated by many scholars each one of whom was very well versed in Vedas-Sastras. Entire stretches of skyline was blanketed by the smoke arising out of the sacred fires burning in each and every house.

The nearby river flowed all around the year and thereby turned the entire landscape into a deep emerald green color as far as the eye could see with plenty of plants and trees weighed downed by the weight of their own seeds and fruits! and the blessed populace who lived off such a land indulged themselves in the dutiful pursuit of numerous sacrifices.

Sudheendra Theertha welcomed Venkatanatha warmly to the Sri Mutt at Kumbakonam and asked Venkatanatha to continue his pursuit of Vedas-Sastras under him. In turn Venkatanatha studied the necessary tenets of 'ancient grammatical texts' authored by such stalwarts as, Jayadeva and Prabhakara and studied the classical works like "Chandrika" of Sri Vyasa Theertha.

Everyday Venkatanatha used to get up well before sunrise and after finishing his morning ablutions used to be deeply engrossed in the study of the Upanishad Bhasya, Bramha sootra bhasya, and the Gita Bhasya written by the great Sri Madhwacharya. As the day progressed he used to also study the 'Tarka' bhasya and give discourses on various religious tenets! Thus Venkatanatha spent some years at the Sri Mutt of Sudheendra Theertha at Kumbakonam.

Once Venkatanatha accompanied Sri Sudheendra Theertha to a place known as 'Dakshina Dwaraka' where a seminar was in progress on the question of hierarchy of 'Jeeva over the Parabramha'. Venkatanatha who also participated in the debate based his arguments

on the Maha Bhasya of Sriman Madhwacharya and was able to defeat the principal orator Dravida Pandita. Sri Sudheendra Theertha who was also present during the debate was immensely pleased by his pupil's oratory skills and his complete mastery of Sri Madhwacharya's Maha Bhasya!, conferred the title of "Maha Bhasyakara" on Venkatanatha!!. Soon Maha Bhasyakara Venkatanatha's fame as a great Vaishnavaite scholar spread far and wide and he became Sudheendra Theertha's favorite disciple!
On another occasion at Tanjore, another great court pandit 'Yagna Narayana' also tried to argue with Venkatanatha in a scholarly debate but in vain and finally had to accept defeat. Thus Mahabhasyakara Venkatanatha became a reputed scholar with no competition whatsoever in sight!!
But Venkatanatha who was the 'very embodiment of oceanic knowledge' soon found himself mired in utter poverty! Venkatanatha, the great scholar, the great teacher with numerous pupils and who was always engaged in imparting knowledge to others was soon staring poverty in its starkest face! This was in fact a 'harbinger of things to come' - i.e. like the 'Empire of Knowledge' that would soon be his!, brought about by the continuous meditation on Moola Narayana! as practiced by Venkatanatha!
Venkatanatha could afford to wear only one set of clothes in an entire year! He could not afford to buy even coarse textured clothes let alone fine clothes! Wearing rich silken clothes was a non-existent dream! He could not even afford to buy enough oil to take an oil bath even once a year! In such a situation, using 'ghee tinged food' was simply out the question! He could not even afford two simple square meals a day! Even when he somehow managed to find food there was no plates or leaves available in the house on which to 'place' the food and the food was placed on the bare floor and eaten! On some occasion when Venkatanatha 'accepted' food from others he took care to 'accept' such food only in the barest minimum quantity so as to just satisfy his hunger! Nothing more!
Once Venkatanatha's house was looted by thieves who 'broke in' and decamped with even the pathetic 'riff-raff' of torn clothes and broken utensils that were lying around in the house! Venkatantha was now reduced to wearing only the 'barest minimum' necessary to lead the life of an ascetic that was awaiting him in the very near future!! Venkatanatha had to go without food for at least 5-6 days in a month apart from the customary two days of compulsory fasting on 'ekadashi' days! Venkatanatha's state of affairs was in dire contrast to the affluent life styles of his father and grandfather and there was not even an iota of similarity between his lifestyle and that of his forefathers!
Even in such a poverty stricken state Venkatantha went about adorning himself with the holy signs (mudras and namas) of a well fed brahmin! And busied himself in the pursuit of Veda-Sastras and gave many religious discourses extolling the Supremacy of Sri Hari! His wife Saraswati also 'satisfied' herself just by being with her husband and used to 'fill her stomach' by just talking to her beloved husband Venkatantha!

Later on, one day Sudheendra Theertha sent word for Venkatanatha and informed him about his 'dream' wherein Sriman Moola Rama Himself had commanded that Venkatantha should be 'ordained' as the next successor of the Sri Mutt and as a heir to the vast Vedic Empire!!
Venkatanatha was dumbfounded when he heard this from Sudheendra Theertha! He humbly pleaded with Sudheendra Theertha by saying that just how could anyone even think about offering him the 'exalted position' and anoint him as the Head of the Vedic

kingdom?! Venkatanatha expressed his own doubts as to whether he could ever hope to carry such a huge responsibility by himself! Sudheendra Theertha tried to reason with Venkatanatha by saying that he (Venkatanatha) had God given gifts such as intelligence and control over all senses in abundant measures which would enable him to successfully undertake the responsibility of sainthood and on top of it he had his (Sudheendra Theertha's) fullest Blessings!

But an unconvinced Venkatanatha personally opined to Sudheendra Theertha that his wife was still very young, he had not even performed the thread ceremony of his son and he himself was too young to even contemplate about taking up sainthood! Venkatanatha also confessed that in spite of such shortcomings, if he was still forced to take up 'sanyaysa', he would have no other choice, but to leave the Sri Mutt itself and settle elsewhere with his family!

Sudheendra Theertha implored Venkatanatha not to do so and explained to him about the many limitations of a family life which would impede a scholar like Venkatanatha's quest in realizing the "Ultimate Knowledge" that awaited him! But an adamant Venkatanatha did not heed to his guru's advise and rushed out from the Sri Mutt and hurriedly reached his own house!

Ventakanatha did not know what to do next! He knew that if he once again went back to the Sri Mutt he would be definitely forced into accepting sainthood by Sudheendra Theertha sooner or later! But at the same time Venkatanatha did not dare to run away from the Sri mutt and end up being cursed by Sri Sudheendra Theertha for such an act of his!

The news of the impending ordainment of Venkatanatha 'fell' on the ears of his wife Saraswati also! She was completely devastated by this news! She felt as though someone had pierced her very soul with a sharp instrument! She wept silently over the very thought of being 'separated' from her beloved husband Venkatanatha!

Venkatantha was finding it difficult to sleep ! Late in the night, Venkatanatha felt someone sitting next to his bedside! He was startled to see that it was a 'Divine Woman' draped in a grand saree woven with golden silk threads! and emanating a divine radiance all round!! Venkatanatha stared - wonder struck! And thought to himself as to who this woman could be? She was wearing priceless gold ornaments! Her face itself was shining brightly like polished gold! Her jet black hair flowed down in long cascades! Her entire form was blemish less! She looked like Goddess Sarswathi herself! Venkatanatha looked on wondering whether she was really a human being, or was she an angel? Or was she a divine Goddess!?

Then the 'divine form' began talking to Venkatanatha!

O! Acharya! - I am none other than Vidya Lakshmi! I was born out of Sri Veda Vyasa and I was brought up with much love and affection by Sri Madhwacharya who fed me with the milk collected from the 'Kamadhenu' of Bramha sutras of Sri Veda Vyasa! Next I stepped into the threshold of youth with the help of Sri Akshobhya Theertha and his pupil Sri Jaya Theertha! I flourished with unbridled enthusiasm under the masterly tutelage of Sri Vyasa Theertha and his immortal works - 'Chandrika and Tharka thandava!' My stature and fame spread everywhere with the abilities of Sri Vijayeendra Theertha. Sri Vijayeendra Theertha presented me with the fragrant box containing the 'Tatva manikya peti' and the priceless necklace of 'Nyayamuktasrija' Then his successor Sri Sudheendra Theertha composed 'Subhadra parinaya' which became my favorite

playground! Now only you are fit enough to write commentaries on 'Nyaya Sudha' and 'Chandrika'. O! Venkatanathacharya I shall stay with Sudheendra Theertha for only two more years now. I am bound by the command of Sri Veda Vyasa to stay with only those sanyasis who worship Sri Moola Rama! And only 'sanyasis' of the highest order can worship Sri Moola Rama! Now you must accept the wishes of Sudheendra Theertha as the will of Sri Moola Rama Himself! Otherwise the Vedic Empire will be doomed! There is nothing false in what I say! Since only you can protect the Vedic Kingdom from its demise! If you don't accept sanyasa then the numerous 'granthas' will be orphaned without anyone left to propagate their message and soon will become fodder for rats!
Oh! Venkatanathacharya if you do not accept sanyasa, at the 'court of Emperors' wherein till now the Supremacy of Sri Hari was being extolled in great measure will be replaced by the Supremacy of lesser known Gods and Goddess! The corridors of the Sri Mutt which are now vibrating with the chants of the Vedas and Mantras, will in future become a dwelling place for forest animals like foxes! The well read pages of great 'granthas' will be slowly eaten away by worms! The Sri Mutt soon deprived of students will henceforth become the roosting place of all kinds of birds! The prayer halls of the Sri Mutt which is now lit up by hundreds of lamps will soon be darkened by the winged feathers of owls flocking in their hundreds! And thereby spreading darkness (ignorance) all around! That is why it is so imperative for you to take up sanyasa! Otherwise mark my words!, the Sri mutt which is now enveloped by clouds of 'holy smoke' arising from countless yagnas will definitely become the permanent haunting grounds of evil spirits! Oh! What a situation I foresee! The altar where once Sudheendra Theertha and his peers worshipped will itself be completely covered by the dust of time in future!
On the contrary if you accept sainthood I shall stay with you till eternity and I will not forsake you for anyother sansyasi! Oh! Venkatanatha sainthood is written in your forehead by providence(fate) and 'to be with you' is written in my forehead by providence(fate)!! You can never escape from this fate of yours, whatever you do! So saying Goddess Sarswathi Blessed Venkatanatha by placing her hand on his head! and disappeared!

Venkatanatha got up feeling a change come over him. All the resident doubts that he had in his mind on whether to take up sainthood had vanished! He mind was now firmly set up on taking up sainthood! He left for the Sri Mutt, met Sudheendra Theertha and accordingly gave his consent for embracing sanyasa! Sudheendra Theertha was overjoyed by the turn of events! He instructed Venkatanatha to immediately perform the thread ceremony of his young son Laxminarayana. Accordingly, Venkatanatha followed his guru's instruction and finished the thread ceremony of his son and also henceforth formally offered the custody of his son to the care of the Gods !
Sudheendra Theertha realized that Venkatanatha's wife Saraswathi would not allow her husband to take up sainthood at Kumbakonam. So Sudheendra Theertha took Venkatanatha to Tanjore instead, to initiate him into sainthood there!
In Tanjore, Venkatanatha performed the 'viraja homa' thereby ritually cutting off all his links with his relatives! He accepted the "ochre robes' from Sudheendra Theertha and wore them! When Vekatanatha rose from his bath wearing saffron clothes he looked like the Rising Sun Itself! Venkatanatha sat near Sudheendra Theertha to accept

'gyanopadesha' from him! Sudheendra Theertha was overcome with emotion for his young disciple! He whole heartedly imparted the 'Pranava Upadhesa' to Venkatanatha.!!

Next, Sudheendra Theertha as per his dreams following the command of Sri Moola Rama ordained Venkatanatha by giving him the holy name of "RAGHAVENDRA" THEERTHA and anointed him as the new head of the Empire of Vedic Kingdom and handed over the reigns of the Sri Mutt to his disciple! Sudheendra Theertha blessed his successor Sri Raghavendra Theertha to follow the traditions of previous pontiffs of the Sri Mutt like Sri Surendra Theertha and Sri Vijayeendra Theertha and attain the full fruits of penance and knowledge like his predecessors!
Sudheendra Theertha himself performed the 'abhisheka' on Sri Raghavendra Theertha by placing precious gems and flowers and pouring waters of many holy rivers on the new incumbent, accompanied by the chanting of Vedic hymns! Thus the formality of ordainment into sainthood was completed by Sudheendra Theertha!
The Moola Rama idols along with 'Vysasa Musti', holy 'granthas' and the holy insignias of the Sri Mutt was also handed over to Raghavendra Theertha by Sudheendra Theertha! Thus the Vedic Empire which was till now in the custody of the great 'tapasvin' Sudheendra Theertha now came to reside permanently with Sri Raghavendra Theertha who was the greatest worshipper of Sri Moola Rama and the ultimate upholder of all Vedic traditions and Knowledge!

PART -7

The pre-eminent Raghavendra Theertha, the new pontiff of the Sri Mutt at Kumbakonam was a rigorous disciplinarian when it came to observing the Vedic rituals and traditions of the Sri Mutt. In keeping with this tradition Raghavendra Theertha, desirous of visiting holy Vaishnavaite pilgrimage centres and in order to take holy bath in the rivers abutting such holy places, started his 'holy journey' in the auspicious easterly direction!. Raghavendra Theertha who was like an 'ocean of compassion' to his numerous followers first arrived at 'Devanagara' and worshipped the residing deity Goddess Indira Devi with utmost devotion.

During the 'stop-overs' in the course of his 'travel', Raghavendra Theertha engaged himself in giving highly enlightening religious discourses on 'Pramana Padathi' of Sri Jayateertha to deserving pupils. Thus Raghavendra Theertha shone like a 'full moon' over the 'vast ocean' of Sriman Madhwacharya's all encompassing Philosophy!!

Raghavendra Theertha later came to 'Kamalalaya' to have a 'darshan' of Goddess Mahalakshmi! From Kamalalaya, Raghavendra Theertha proceeded towards 'Maheshwara Kshethra' and had a 'darshan' of Lord Maheshwara. Next Raghavendra Theertha arrived at the sacred place (sangama) where the River Kaveri drained into the sea.

River Kaveri drains into the sea in a 'very subtle manner' and this looked as though the river Kaveri was trying to ferret out priceless gem stones from the very depths of the

'earth' in order to offer it to YatiRaja Raghavendra Theertha who had come to take a holy dip at the 'Sangama'!

Raghavendra Theertha took a long holy dip both at the 'Sangama Kshethra' of the River Kaveri. Later when the pontiff rose from his bath he 'resembled' Sriman Narayana Himself ! rising from the river Kaveri, after finishing a long period of meditation!

After his bath Raghavendra Theertha sat on the sea shore and was soon deeply immersed in the meditation of Lord Krishna, the legendary slayer of the evil demons, the remover of all obstacles and the 'sole guardian' of his countless devotees and guiding them towards 'salvation' by washing away all their accumulated sins!!

Next Raghavendra Theertha accompanied by his select group of 'selfless devotees', each one of whom was in himself 'thoroughly sanctified and pure at heart' and 'fully blessed' by Raghavendra Theertha himself, left for 'Champaka Puram', to worship Lord Gopala Krishna.

Raghavendra Theertha was completely overcome with devotion on seeing Lord Gopala Krishna ! The eminent pontiff offered many prayers to the deity and made offerings of fresh butter milk and curds and stayed at that place for many days. Raghavendra Theertha prayed to Lord Gopala Krishna with utmost devotion.!!

Raghavendra Theertha prayed to Lord Gopala Krishna thus -- O! Gopala Krishna I shall pour out my entire devotion (knowledge) which is in my heart at your Lotus Feet! To me Your Two Feet looks like 'Divine Signposts' directing me towards Salvation 'Mukti' !! O! Krishna. Whenever I behold Your Tiny Anklets tied to Your Divine Feet I see the eternal 'OMKARA' in them!

O! Krishna, the minute I behold Your 'Divine Form' all my fatigue (sins) disappear and my whole body and soul is energized by your Divine 'Darshan'.!! The 'rays' streaming out from your Divine Smile drive away the ignorance from many a noble soul! Oh! Krishna, Even by understanding the Eternal Vedas one cannot fully comprehend Your Supreme Divinity and Totality!!. O! Krishna! Let Your Ever Radiant Face with swirls of curly hair be embedded permanently in my senses till Eternity, O! Bala Gopala Krishna!

After thus praying to Lord Gopala Krishna, Raghavendra Theertha next enthusiastically came to view the 'Rama Setu'. (the bridge built by Lord Rama)! There Raghavendra Theertha beheld the vast stretch of sea that lay before him, which was home to countless marine-life and the whole area was very calm and was constantly soothed by sea breeze wafting across from the distant horizon!.

On seeing the great Yati Raja Raghavendra Theertha Himself standing on the sea-shore, the sea waves could not contain its excitement and surged forward in 'huge walls of water' to fall at the feet of Sri Raghavendra Theertha and take his Blessings by washing his holy pontiff's feet with their waters, but the surging waves could not come forward

to the spot where Yatiraja Raghavendra stood!! and were 'halted' mid-way!! The on rushing waves thus deprived of a chance to worship the Holy Saint , rose one above the other creating a deafening roar and commotion all around!!!

It looked as though the 'Sea' itself was performing the 'Welcome Aarathi' with the help of the outstretched arms of the rising waves themselves!!, to welcome Sri Raghavendra Theertha , the brightest jewel ever to ordain the Parama Hamsa Peeta!!, the Holiest of the Holy among Saints ever, who stood on the sea shore watching them!

The Samudra Raja, Lord of the Seas, saw the glorious 'Full Moon' in the personality of Raghavendra Theertha, the Divine Tree 'Kalpa Vruksha' in Raghavendra Theertha's Hands!, Divine Nectar 'Amrit' in Raghavendra Theertha's eyes!!, and Goddess Maha Laxmi Devi Herself in Raghavendra Theertha's inner conscience!!

After observing all his 'offspring' (born out of the Seas) residing safely in Raghavendra Theertha, the 'Samudra Raja' could not hold back his heartfelt joy and started dancing with unbridled happiness!!. This is how it seemed when the waves undulated in rhythmic manner in front of Sri Raghavendra Theertha.!!

The Sea Lord was very much 'worried' that henceforth Sri Hari who used to 'rest on the Seas' on the Celestial Bed of Lord Aadi Sesha, would henceforth forsake it for Sri Raghavendra Theertha and would take up permanent residence in the 'Heart' (Inner Sanctum) of Guru Sarvabhouma Raghavendra Theertha! , which was unceasingly resonating with the Divine Name of Sri Hari!!

Thus the 'Seas' being upset over this thought of having to 'permanently part with Sri Hari', thrashed about in utter torment and resembled a 'huge bull tied down in the cowshed' and struggling to untie itself!!

On this vast expanse of water, Lord Ramachandra Prabhu had built a bridge to 'sew' up the fissure in the Earth, which was cut into half by his arrows!!. Later on the bridge which was built over that very 'spot' looked as though it was a 'patch-work' done by covering the 'fissure' with the (clothes) huge rocks that were piled one upon another, across the seas, by the monkey armies of Lord Rama! This bridge looked like the very 'nose-line' of the seas itself! Due to the evil influence of 'Kali' it looked as though the last remaining leg of 'Dharma' had taken up refuge in the seas and had left an everlasting 'imprint' on the seas itself in the form of this 'bridge'. Such a bridge was 'now' the sole benefactor of all those who came to seek refuge (in dharma) and was very 'efficient' in washing away the sins of the multitudes of people who sought its divine refuge!! The bridge also looked like the 'hands of the seas' itself which was spread open in order to wipe away the tears of Sita Devi, the daughter of Mother Earth.!

Thus Raghavendra Theertha had a holy bath at the confluence of the three seas after sighting the holy 'Sri Rama Setu' Soon after finishing his holy bath, Raghavendra Theertha sat on the sea shore and was soon deeply immersed in meditation of Lord

Moola Rama who was the Sole Protector of the righteous, the Very Abode of Compassion and the Vanquisher of the sins of all those who come seeking His refuge!

Later Raghavendra Theertha left for Toyadri to worship Lord Hari. Toyadri nestled in the midst of nature's bounty itself, the huge trees that grew amongst the mist covered mountains were constantly 'watered' by the low lying clouds and there was no other place which was more 'qualified' in all respects to attain (mukti) salvation than Toyadri!! It looked as though all roads of 'salvation' led to Toyadri and ended at the Divine Feet of the Presiding Deity, Sri Hari!!

Raghavendra Theertha later left for 'Anathshayanam' to worship Lord Ananta Padmanabha and also visited the nearby Janaradhana Kshethra! Later Raghavendra Theertha arrived at the banks of the river Tamrapani, took a holy bath in the river and worshipped the nine idols of 'Devtas' that had been consecrated earlier on the banks of the river. From there he arrived at the big city of Madurai situated on the banks of the river 'Krutamala'.

At the court of King of Madurai, Raghavendra Theertha won over many resident 'pandits' in scholarly debate and the 'Victorious Yati Sreshta' was conferred with many a Royal Title by the grateful King of Madurai!! Later the Holy Saint had a 'Darshan' of Lord Shiva at Vrushabachala and arrived at the Holy Pilgrim Centre of Srirangam to worship Lord Ranganatha Swamy!

At Srirangam, Raghavendra Theertha beheld the principal deity Lord Ranganatha Swamy reclining on the Celestial Bed of 'Sesha Deva' in a 'Divine Pavilion (Mantap)', that was constantly washed by the gushing waters of the River Kaveri, constantly cooled by the soothing breeze wafting in along with flow of the river and who was the very Origin of all Vedas, and was constantly being attend upon by countless Gods and Goddesses led by none other than Lord Bramha and Lord Rudra Deva along with their Divine Consorts!!. The Parama Hamsa Yativarenya Raghavendra Theertha stayed at Srirangam in this 'Celestial Presence' of Lord Ranganatha Swamy for some days.

PART – 8

Yati Sarvabhouma Raghavendra Theertha who ‘shone like the full moon over the vast Ocean of Madhwa doctrine’ and was always immersed in the continuous meditation of Lord Narayana, constantly emanating divinity by his holy presence, gave religious discourses encompassing all subjects of Madhwa doctrines ranging from ‘Pramana Paddathi’ of Jayatheertha to Vyasa Theertha’s ‘Chandrike’ in the vicinity of Lord Ranganathaswamy.

The holiest of the holy pontiff, Raghavendra Theertha with the full blessings of Lord Ranganatha headed in a northerly direction along with his entourage. In due course Raghavendra Theertha arrived at ‘Namaparvata’ where he worshipped Lord Narasimha, the vanquisher of the sins of multitudes of devotees!, and stayed there till sunrise on the next day. Raghavendra Theertha soon arrived at a place known as ‘Banavara’ where he engaged two well ‘entrenched’ scholars namely Bhairava Bhatta and Veera Bhadra in a

scholarly debate and defeated them effortlessly. The ruler of the region gave away an important village as a 'gift' to Raghavendra Theertha in recognition of his victory over the two learned scholars.

From Banavara, Raghavendra Theertha left for Vishnu Mangala, where he worshipped Lord Vishnu. Next he left for Kumara Kshethra and prostrated before Lord Kumaraswamy, the presiding deity. The holy saint stayed at Kumara kshetra which was always full of devotees, seeking the Blessings of Lord Kumaraswamy in getting themselves rid of all sorts of skin ailments, and stayed there for some days.

Next Raghavendra Theertha left Kumaras kshethra and visited many holy places en route and finally arrived at Rajatapeeta Pura (Udipi). Here Raghavendra Theertha beheld the magnificently beautiful and radiantly graceful idol of Lord Krishna, Lord of Rukmini Devi, installed and worshipped by Sri Anandatheertha Bhagavatpada
(Madhwacharya) Himself!

At Udipi, Raghavendra Theertha completed the religious discourses on 'Chandrike' ten times in the Divine Vicinity of Lord Krishna! Raghavendra Theertha using the golden plates of 'Bramhasutra', lit the lamp of 'Tantradeepika' after dipping the 'wicks' known as 'Sutra Bhasya' in the 'ghee' contained in 'Nyayasuda!' Also Raghavendra Theertha spun the Bramhasutras into fine golden threads and crafted it into a dazzling necklace of 'Nyaya Muktavali' to forever adorn the necks of Vedic Scholars!! Here, Raghavendra Theertha also finished composing a great literary work known as 'Chandrikaprakasha' ! Raghavendra Theertha , a great visionary beyond compare!!, composed many highly classical scholastic works and fore told that all his works would be 'befittingly dispersed' by the 'succeeding pontiffs' who would adorn the 'Holy Peeta' in the future!! and thereby guide the numerous co-religionists in the correct 'sastraic' path.!!

On the occasion of Sri Rama Navami, it looked as though Nature itself had taken up a new fresh look in the form of the spring in order to show its 'deep devotion' to Sriman Moola Rama, worshipped by Raghavendra Theertha! Thus the Nature offered its bounty to Raghavendra Theertha in the form of infinite variety of fresh flowers, fruits and tender leaflets, which was in turn offered to Sriman Moola Rama by a grateful Raghavendra Theertha.!! Indeed blessed was Nature and thus Nature, being blessed by Raghavendra Theertha blossomed into a riot of colors with trees and plants in full bloom! Raghavendra Theertha worshipped Sri Moola Rama with utmost devotion and performed the customary 'abhisheka' to Sri Moola Rama with great pomp and glory!!

As the seasons changed Raghavendra Theertha engaged in performing rituals as envisaged in the strict traditions as laid out in the 'Sastras'. Raghavendra Theertha then began to observe the 'Chaturmasa Vrata' and was wholly immersed in the meditation of Lord Narayana! Raghavendra Theertha performed the daily rituals and worshipped Lord Moola Rama during 'Chaturmasaya' when the Sun was at its zenith in the sky! ! The holy pontiff, Raghavendra Theertha strictly observed all stipulated rituals in connection with the 'Chaturmasa Vrata'. Mere words fail to bring about the full glory of Raghavendra Theertha during his 'Chaturmasa'. It is said that any person who can

‘manage’ to fully describe the glory of Raghavendra Theeertha’s daily routine of imparting ‘religious discourses’,‘ ritualistic worships’ and the manner in which the holy saint invoked Lord Sriman Narayana during ‘Chaturmasa’, would himself become very well versed in all the four Vedas and would be on his way to lead a life of complete renunciation!! Such was the glory of Raghavendra Theertha during ‘Chaturmasa’.!!

It is said that on seeing the holy Raghavendra Theertha imparting ‘divine knowledge’ to his legion of needy disciples, the over hanging clouds just gaped and ‘forgot’ to ‘give rains’! and as Raghavendra Theertha continued his journey northward, it looked as though the clouds were accompanying the holy pontiff, like his numerous followers to give him a warm send off!

Raghavendra Theetha arrived at Pandrapura and had a divine ‘darshan’ of Lord Panduranga Vittala and later arrived at ‘Karaveera Pura’ and stayed at that place for some time. Following the ‘natural cyclic change of seasons’, Raghavendra Theertha arrived at Ramanathapuram and had a holy bath at the fast flowing river nearby. Later Raghavendra Theertha arrived at the banks of the holy river Godavari which ‘had’ sanctifying powers to wash away the sins of even great sages! Here the holy saint had a ‘ritualistic bath’ in the river Godavari and continued his journey and was felicitated by countless scholars en route, arrived at the city of ‘Vijaya”.

Raghavendra Theertha entered the city of ‘Vijaya’ with this full entourage of disciples. At the court of the King of Vijayangar, Raghavendra Theertha won over many renowned scholars in an outstanding manner and was richly awarded by the King with royal insignias and titles!! Next accompanied by numerous scholars who were ‘won over’ in scholarly debates, Raghavendra Theertha arrived at the banks of the river Krishna, had a holy bath in the river and stayed on the banks of the holy river for some time. Here Guru Sarvabhouma Raghavendra Theertha penned ‘literary notes’ on Sri Jayateertha’s ‘Tatva Parakashika’ and also wrote ‘path-breaking analysis’ on Srimadacharya’s Anu Bhasya!!

Later Raghavendra Theertha arrived at Srishila to worship Lord Mallikarjuna. Next he left for Venkatachala (Tirupati) to have a ‘darshan’ of Lord Venkateshwara! He prayed to the Lord with utmost devotion and stayed at Tirupati for some time! Next he arrived at the city of ‘Kanchi’ resplendent with many ‘storied buildings’. Here the holy saint worshipped Lord Varadaraja and later came to Shivakanchi where he worshipped Lord Shiva the ‘Divine Partner’ of Goddess Parvati Devi! Next he arrived at Arunachala, worshipped Lord Shambu and also worshipped Lord Rudra Deva at Vrudhachalam. From there Raghavendra Theertha arrived at Srimushna and worshipped Lord Varahaswamy. After a long journey, Raghavendra Theertha once again ‘set his eyes’ the river Kaveri and was overcome with joy and happiness.!!

Raghavendra Theertha entered the huge city of Kumbakonam holding forth the idol of Sriman Moola Rama and it looked as though Raja Rama Himself along with His younger brother Bharatha were together triumphantly ‘entering’ the city of Ayodhya.!! Raghavendra Theertha headed straight for the Hanumanatha temple situated at the centre of the city and prayed with utmost devotion there!. The entire population of the city of

Kumbakonam cutting across all sections of society, gave the victorious Raghavendra Theertha a rousing welcome.!! Entire stretches of streets en route was completely covered with the petals of thousands of flowers strewn all around to welcome the holy pontiff who strode on it with a majestic countenance!! Scholars who had arrived from far and wide, vied with each other to welcome the Yati Raja Raghavendra Theertha!!. Groups of lithe damsels performed the auspicious 'aarathi' to welcome Raghavendra Theertha to the accompaniment of the 'melodious notes' arising from various auspicious musical instruments, the sounds of which rose heaven wards covering all the four directions.!! Thus Raghavendra Theertha 'arrived' at the Sri Mutt at Kumbakonam along with the idol of Sriman Moola Rama after successfully completing his 'Digvijaya Yatra"!!.

PART - 9:

At Kumbakonam, Yatiraja Raghavendra Theertha 'awakened' well before the break of dawn!. The 'proud moon' that was 'romping around unchallenged' and fearlessly during the night times, vanished once the 'real star' of the skies Sri Raghavendra Theertha awoke from His 'bed' made of tiger skin!! Next Sri Raghavendra Theertha read the religious works extolling the virtues of Lord Hari Narayana!. Raghavendra Theertha dutifully prayed to Lord Narayana and to the 'Devtas' and 'Gurus' and 'accepted' the affectionate offerings of His disciples and 'ushers' who were waiting on Him! Sri Raghavendra Theertha next went to the 'Tulasi' garden and worshipped Goddesses Mahalaxmi Devi always 'Omni present' in the 'Tulasi' plant!!. Next He worshipped Prana Devaru who was always 'Omni present' at the feet of Goddess Mahalaxmi Devi and who was always Blessed with the Infinite Benevolence of Lord Laxmi Narayana!!

Next Sri Raghavendra Theertha sat in the palanquin 'fully immersed' in reciting the 'Gajendra Moksha' chapter from The Srimad Baghavata and was 'carried' towards the holy River Kaveri which was also known as 'Dakshina Ganga', for a ritualistic bath. The River Kaveri was full of 'floating flowers' that had fallen off from the countless rows of trees growing abundantly on its banks! The River Kaveri shone with a 'golden red color due to the countless red 'champak' flowers that had fallen into it.!! The River Kaveri 'constantly flowed' with the sweet nectars of thousands of lotus flowers 'gathered' during its long journey from its 'birth place' in the lofty mountain ranges! No wonder, Lord Ranganatha Swamy, likened herein as the 'Divine Bee!!, had chosen to 'reside' in such a divine nectar filled River Kaveri.!

Sri Raghavendra Theertha arrived at the 'pavilion' on the banks of the River Kaveri and alighted from the palanquin for His customary ritualistic bath. The Holy Pontiff then applied holy mud on His hands and feet and washed them in the pristine river waters. Sri Raghavendra Theertha next uttering the Holy Name of the Supreme Lord Narayana three times, took bath

in the river! At the time of taking bath Yatiraja Raghavendra Theertha uttered 'holy mantras' thereby first 'sanctifying' the water and then sprinkled the 'sanctified waters' on His head. Then Sri Raghavendra Theertha immersed His 'Holy Form' in the river!, whilst continuously chanting the 'OM' mantra.!! Thus Sri Raghavendra Theertha performed the 'abhiseka' to Lord Hari Narayana who was always 'present in His Soul' by uttering the divine hymns of 'Purusha Sukta' and completed His bath by a final ritualistic offering of water! After thus finishing His 'ritualistic bath', the Holy Pontiff, Raghavendra Theertha wore fresh set of clothes and with a blob of 'Gopi Chandana' anointed Himself with the customary Holy Marks (Urdhva Pundra) along with the five 'Mudras.'! Sri Raghavendra Theertha also meditated on the Holy "Gayatri Mantra" and the "Pranava Mantra" with total "time-stopping" concentration!! Next Sri Raghavendra Theertha came to the pavilion on the river bank and worshipped the Idol of Baghwan Veda Vyasa and heard the holy story of Lord Hari Narayana from the assemblage of pious brahmins present there!.

Sri Raghavendra Theertha then poured 'sanctified water' on Lord Hari, and followed this by the customary 'abhisheka' with 'honey' and once again performed the 'abhisheka' with 'sanctified water'! Then Sri Raghavendra Theertha offered the ritualistic offerings of freshly prepared pre-sanctified food to Lord Hari.!

Soon after, Sri Raghavendra Theertha arrived at the 'Holy Brindavana' of his Paramaguru Sri Vijayeendra Theertha and 'bowed' with utmost devotion and reverence.!! Then Sri Raghavendra Theertha began walking towards the Sri Mutt on wooden sandals (padukaas) studded with precious gems!!! The attendants of Guru Sarvabhouma Raghavendra Theertha walked ahead, heralding the 'arrival' of the Holy Pontiff by blowing conch shells accompanied by the 'auspicious notes' arising from various musical instruments like drums, trumpets and 'mrudangams!' Parama Hamsa Kula Tilaka Raghavendra Theertha walked towards the Sri Mutt, instantly sanctifying the very ground on which He tread with each Divine and Holy Step!!, and it looked as though the "Divine Kalpataru" was 'walking ahead' on the face of the Earth in the form of 'Yati Shiromani' Raghavendra Teertha.!! On the way to the Sri Mutt, Yatiraja Raghavendra Theertha prayed to Lord Eshwara as He passed in front of the Lord Eshwara temple.

Sri Raghavendra Theertha used to next engaged in giving religious discourses on Bramha Sutra Bashya.!! Gururaja Raghavendra Theertha greatly extolled the Unique Characteristics of Lord Hari, who was the Supreme Being and Independent from any other living being!! Sri Raghavendra Theertha used to elaborate extensively on the Infinite Qualities of Lord Hari - The Para Bramha! This Omnipresent force was 'entirely different' from anything else in 'existence' in the entire Cosmos! That such a Divine Power was the 'Only Guarantor' of salvation and must be realized only by adhering to the

tenets of Veda-Sastras, so well highlighted by Sriman Madhwacharya, the proponent of Dwaita Philosophy.!! Thus Guru Sarvabhouma Raghavendra Theertha used to be fully immersed in giving such religious discourses and had to be "notified" by His disciples about the afternoon ablutions since the mid afternoon Sun was already in the centre of the sky and the Sun looked as though it too had 'come to listen to the discourses' given by Sri Raghavendra Theertha! Thus Guru Raghavendra Theertha gave lengthy discourses quoting extensively from the 'Upanishads' for the benefit of His numerous followers and completed the religious discourses on the Bramha Sutras! Sri Raghavendra Theertha got up from His 'peeta' to begin the conduct of His afternoon ablutions. Sri Raghavendra Theertha once again 'took' a ritualistic bath in the water-tank abutting the Sri Mutt and came inside to perform the 'famed' worship of Sriman Moola Rama.

Sri Raghavendra Theertha first devotedly worshipped the 'container of the sanctified water' with many lotus flowers and next poured the sanctified water over the 'saligrama shilas' and then over the idol of Sriman Moola Rama.!! Sri Raghavendra Theertha next worshipped Sriman Moola Rama with freshly plucked flowers and precious pearls and diamonds! Sri Raghavendra Theertha sprinkled the 'sanctified water' thus 'flowing out' after bathing the Idol of Sriman Moola Rama, on the top of His head and 'swallowed' a few drops from the sanctified water which had collected after washing the Feet of Sriman Moola Rama !! These two 'actions' of Sri Raghavendra Theertha in itself were equivalent to performing simultaneously the mighty 'Ashwamedha Yagna' and the 'Rajasuya Yagna'. respectively!!

As it is, the waters of the River Kaveri are very holy in nature. But such 'sanctified water' that had 'collected' after washing the Feet of Lord Narayana was in itself capable of granting the four "Purushartas"!! to all those fortunate ones who partook such "sanctified water"!. Lastly Sri Raghavendra Theertha bowed before Lord Hari Narayana most respectfully and accepted 'pre-sanctified' food in the form of 'biksha'(ritualistic 'food-offerings'), fit to be accepted by 'ascetics'! After partaking such food Sri Raghavendra Theertha enthralled a huge audience consisting of numerous scholars who had arrived at the Sri Mutt from far and wide, enlightening them on various aspects of ancient Logic and Grammar texts and was deeply immersed in chanting the Divine Name of Lord Hari Narayana, till sunset.!!

PART – 10:

The evening sky was resplendent with the dark orange color of the setting Sun from one end of the horizon to the other! Thousands of birds flocked in huge numbers to their nests, mistaking the bright orange colored skies to be the ‘fires’ arising from their burning nests and anxiously flew back to cater to the young ones left alone in the nests!! The simultaneously setting Sun and the rising Moon both resembled the ‘Shankodaka’

(the holy waters flowing out of the Conch Shell) and the 'Vishnu Padodaka'(the holy waters flowing out after washing the feet of Lord Vishnu) respectively, collected in the 'golden plate' of the 'Sky' itself!! At this hour at the Sri Mutt at Kumbakonam, Yuga Purusha Raghavendra Theertha worshipped the 'saligramas' that resembled 'Busy Bees!' and placed them in a 'box' that resembled a dwindling lotus flower at sunset!! (thus entrapping the 'saligramas' likened herein as the busy bees!!) The pitch dark night looked as though the Serpent King 'Sesha' Himself had come in the form of the dark Moon spreading His serpentine hoods all round in the 'form of darkness' and to thus silently eves drop on the ongoing religious discourses being rendered by Gururaja Raghavendra Theertha.! The entire world was thus awash in the 'soothingly cool moon shine' of the Full Moon!! Yati Raja Raghavendra Theertha finished His routine religious discourses and rose to once again take 'bath' in the water tank situated behind the Sri Mutt. After finishing the customary evening bath, Sri Raghavendra Theertha 'worshipped' Sriman Moola Narayana 'Omnipresent' in the holy hymns of the Gayatri Mantra and in the Pranava Mantra and uttered them with deep devotion, constantly mulling over each word and was 'completely awash' with Supreme Lord's Name, eternally resonating in the holy hymns! Then Sri Raghavendra Theertha began to perform the evening worship of Lord Moola Rama! Sri Raghavendra Theertha offered fresh flower garlands to Sriman Moola Rama and also completed ritualistic offerings of 'milk and fruits' to Lord Moola Rama with utmost devotion and finally performed 'aarathi' to the Lord with camphor pieces placed in a golden plate.!! Sri Raghavendra Theertha uttered holy hymns all the while, meditating on Sriman Moola Rama and was overcome by devotion towards Moola Rama and prayed aloud to his Lord!!

O! Moola Rama, You Incarnated as The Celestial Fish 'Matsya' just to make Manu aware of Your Infinite and all Encompassing Qualities! Also You 'retrieved' the Vedas and gave them to Lord Bramha, the rightful custodian of the Vedas, and thereby eradicating the darkness of Ignorance! O! Moola Rama during the celestial churning of the Oceans by Gods and Demons in search of 'Amrit' using the Mandhara Mountain itself as a ladle, You Incarnated as "Kurma", The Celestial Tortoise, and thus prevented the Mandhara mountain from sinking into the waters of the Oceans! You 'saved' the Earth which was hidden in the depths of the Oceans, like wise please do resurrect me from the depths of the ignorance that I am mired in! You took the incarnation of 'half lion-half man' to slay the evil demon and I wonder how Your 'awe-inspiring persona' can offer such a cool shade of protection to Your multitudes of devotees! Such a contrast (between appearance & qualities) could be achieved by only 'You' O Lord! You slew the evil demon Hiranyakashipu and 'adorned Yourselves' with the garland made out of the dead demon's intestines', Your Divine Form thus decorated resembled huge clouds lit up 'fearful' bolts of lightening!! I always worship Your 'tiny form' which You so magnanimously 'took', so that You can always adorn the heart of Vedic Scholars! Your Incarnation, thus annihilated entire clans of Kshatriya warriors who tormented Mother Earth! The fame of the Kshatriya clan was 'fully eclipsed' by Your Eternal Fame.! O! Lord I worship Your such Eternal Fame! O! Moola Ramachandra , the sins of humans get washed away by uttering Your very Name! In crossing the sin filled rivers, You have offered the only 'available bridge' (in the utterances of your Divine Name) across sin filled Oceans! You 'stood still' and allowed your mother Yashoda to bind You

to the mill-stone!, though in a way You were always Unbound!! By such action, You indirectly underlined Your Supremacy and In-dependency over everyone and everything!! , You, The Divine Charioteer of this entire Universe, became the charioteer of Arjuna, though no one was surprised! Enrobed in magnificent clothes, You went to the house of the utterly poor Kuchela and ate handful of cooked rice humbly offered by him and transformed the poverty stricken Kuchela into a Kubera.!! O! Moola Ramachandra, Your above incarnations are just to protect the righteous!! Please do abolish all my sins and accept my humble prayers!

Thus Sri Raghavendra Theertha prayed to Sri Moola Rama with utmost devotion! The disciples of the Sri Mutt most reverently requested Sri Raghavendra Theertha to address the numerous scholars waiting patiently for His Audience! Sri Raghavendra Theertha was then led to a broad stage resplendent with a very 'grand throne' at the centre, and a grand ceremonial white umbrella towering above the throne along with the other ceremonial insignias of the Sri Mutt! This 'snow-white' umbrella resembled the 'Celestial Swans' which were struck in mid-flight and had taken up refuge at the throne of Sri Raghavendra Theertha! The pearl-embedded throne itself shone like Heavenly Stars, which had taken refuge at the Feet of Yogiraja Raghavendra Theertha!, the 'Principal Star' in the lineage of immortal pontiffs!! It is of no surprise that all those who take refuge at the Holy Feet of Sri Raghavendra Theertha will be rid of their 'short comings'(sins) and will be fully Blessed with a correct comprehension in respect of Eternal Knowledge! It looked as though Sriman Narayana Himself had come in the form of Sri Raghavendra Theertha wearing 'saffron robes' and was 'holding court' , sitting on the precious throne of 'Adhishesha' on the 'huge stage' which resembled the 'Milky Ocean!!' In this huge gathering of learned scholars Sri Raghavendra Theertha 'heard' many eminent scholars! Some scholars 'pleased' Sri Raghavendra Theertha, who Himself resembled Devendra (Lord Indra)!!, with their 'commentaries' on the Upanishads and the Bramha Sutras.!! Other scholars 'offered' their very own skills in poetry and other 'fine arts' and 'submitted' all their 'works' at the Holy Feet of Sri Gururaja Raghavendra Theertha! It looked as though the 'Devtas' themselves had come to 'Earth' in the form of scholars in order to 'please' Sri Raghavendra Theertha and in turn be Blessed by Him!!

O! Sri Guru Raghavendra Theertha, The Supreme Lord, Sriman Narayana who Incarnated at different epochs of time and upheld the righteous ones by protecting them, now The Supreme Lord has once again 'Incarnated' in Your most auspicious Sri Mutt and is "Present" in the Idol of Sriman Moola Rama accompanied by His Divine Consort Sita Devi and (The Idol) 'hand-crafted' by none other than Lord Bramha!!, in the lofty lineage of the Hamsa Namaka Paramatma!! O! Guru Raghavendra Theertha Your Moola Rama 'Supremely Pleased' by Your Holy Worships' is sure to Bless us also!!

All those noble souls 'fortunate enough' to offer regular worship to Sri Raghavendra Theertha, the "Kalpavruksha"; granting complete happiness and fulfillment to all those who so desire ; emanating the 'divine radiance' of the Full Moon and thereby eradicating the darkness of ignorance spread by 'magicians', masquerading in the form of 'saints'! ; Greatest Messenger of the Supreme Lord Sri Hari Narayana ; always deeply immersed in the meditation of Baghawan Veda Vyasa ; shall be Blessed by the Abundance Grace of Sri Raghavendra Theertha in a manner which cannot be merely extolled fully in words and shall be granted with full realization of all branches of Knowledge!!

//Sri Rama Krishnarpanamastu//

CONCLUDED

A Humble service at the Sri Hari Vayu Sannidhana of Sri Guru Raghavendra Swamigalavara Moola Brin davana, Mantralaya.

With the Blessings of :

His Holiness Sri Sri 1008 Sri Sushameendra Theertha Sreepadangalavaru &
His Holiness Sri Sri 1008 Sri Suvidyendra Theertha Sreepadangalavaru

/Anjaneya Varada Govinda/ / Prahlada Varada Govinda/
/Rajadhiraja GuruSarvabhouma Govinda Govinda